

# PRESS RELEASE



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## Employers urged to 'Grasp the Thistle' on living wage.

The **Scottish Living Wage Campaign** today urged employers in the public, private and voluntary sectors to put an end to poverty wages by raising the earnings of their lowest paid workers to the Scottish living wage level of £7.00 per hour.

The Campaign will launch the Scottish Living Wage Employer award at **10.30am today (5 May), at Dalmarnock Community Centre, 3 Lily Street, Glasgow, G40 3HJ. Peter Kelly, Director of the Poverty Alliance, said;**

*"At least 700,000 workers in Scotland earn less than £7.00 per hour. The majority of these are women and work in the private sector although a significant number also work in the public and voluntary sectors. At a time of recession it is vital that all employers take steps to make ensure that their most valuable assets, their workers, are protected. Evidence shows that paying a living wage is good for workers, business, communities and the wider economy. These are challenging times that require brave decisions".*

The Scottish Living Wage Award will be awarded to those employers who pay all of their workers no less than the Scottish Living Wage of £7.00 per hour. **Dave Moxham Deputy General Secretary of the STUC said:**

*"Poverty wages are bad for people, bad for business and bad for society as a whole. Establishing a Living Wage at a basic decency threshold will not solve the problems of low pay, but it can go a significant way to improving the situation of tens of thousands of workers in Scotland. We are looking forward to uniting trade unions, community groups, faith organisations and enlightened employers in local campaigns across Scotland."*

The Scottish Living Wage Campaign is supported by voluntary and community organisations, trade unions and the faith community. The award will be launched in Dalmarnock where guests will hear from local people about their experiences

of living on low incomes and the difference a living wage would mean to them. **Kenny Faulds** a community activist in Dalmarnock said:

*“Supporting the campaign for a living wage - means supporting sustainable local communities”*

Campaigners believe that there is a strong social, economic and moral case for employers to end the practice of paying poverty wages to the hundreds of thousands of workers doing jobs that many would find unappealing. Evidence suggests that many of these workers have two or even three jobs to afford to feed their families and heat their homes. **Martin Johnstone** from the Church of Scotland said:

*“In the midst of a recession one of the challenges is to come out of it with a more equal society. The Living Wage, if implemented, will help to create a healthier and better society for all.”*

**The launch will include the presentation of the first Living Wage Employer Award to Glasgow City Council**, after they increased the pay of all of their low paid staff to the Scottish Living Wage level. **Steven Purcell**, Leader of the Council, said:

*“I am delighted to accept this award on behalf of Glasgow City Council and congratulate the Scottish Living Wage Campaign on the work they have done to raise awareness of low pay in Scotland. It is simply unacceptable that almost one in five of Glasgow’s workers are paid less than £7 an hour and the Glasgow Living Wage has the potential to make a huge difference to thousands of families across the city. In times of economic difficulties, we know that the lowest paid workers suffer disproportionately. I believe that the introduction of the Glasgow Living Wage is the right thing to do and it is another vital step towards ensuring that all of our citizens can share in the city’s success.”*

ENDS

Notes to editors:

The Scottish Living Wage Campaign is lead by the Poverty Alliance, The STUC, Faith in Community Scotland and UNISON. The Campaign is working with community groups, voluntary organisations, faith based organisations and trade unions to improve the pay of workers across Scotland.

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